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# What If Marketing Principles Was a Macro Course?

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*During the Macromarketing Education track at the 2009 Macromarketing Conference, Robert Mittelstaedt stated that, in his early days of teaching, the introductory marketing course was much more like a Marketing and Society course than what is typically taught today. His assertion led us to ponder the question, “What if all marketing students took a Marketing and Society course?”*

*It has been well-established that historical and current marketing curricula do not sufficiently emphasize the wider implications of marketing beyond its managerial aspects. Turnquist and his colleagues reported that in 1988 only 7 percent of 230 AACSB-accredited schools surveyed offered a Marketing Ethics and Social Issues course regularly with only one school making it a requirement for the marketing major. In the same survey, Marketing Channels was offered regularly in 32 percent of schools and was compulsory for a marketing major in only 11 percent of schools (Turnquist et al. 1991). DeMoss and Nicholson (2005) reported that only 3 percent of Marketing Principles textbooks covered sustainability issues and those are primarily limited to a general discussion of how important it is to be aware of such issues. Rundle-Thiele and Wymer (2010) cataloged ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability courses in universities in Australia and New Zealand and found that 21 percent did not offer a course dedicated to business and society issues. Nicholson and DeMoss (2009) found a significant gap between what is offered and normative levels of instruction on ethics and social responsibility in business school curricula.*

*Current marketing education focuses heavily on the 4Ps and technology that marketing managers use to make decisions and ignores the wider moral, political, and societal contexts of these decisions (Belk 1995; Grey 1996; Priddle 1994; Pride and Ferrell 1979). The limitations of the 4Ps as the predominant pedagogical paradigm have been identified by several authors (Bruner II 1988; Koch 1997; van Waterschoot and Van den Bulte 1992). Van Waterschoot and Van den Bulte (1992) pointed out at least three deficiencies of the 4Ps model: (1) it focuses on what marketers do to customers rather than what they do for them, (2) it takes a mechanistic view about markets, and (3) it assumes a transactional exchange rather than a relationship. Koch (1997) called for a pedagogical shift away from the 4Ps because traditional marketing thinking is heavily reductionist and does not portray actual environmental influences and management processes. As a consequence of such an approach, Ferrell and Gonzalez (2004) found that when first-day marketing students defined marketing to a friend, there was virtually no reference to distribution and pricing.*

*If we want to educate with critical thinking, then in our courses, students should be made aware of the larger social forces that influence their decisions, which include the effects of marketing activities (Benton Jr. 1985). Ferrell and Gonzalez (2004) argued that it is important that professors need to present a holistic vision of marketing from Day One of students' marketing education. Typically, this view is not presented until the end of the marketing program (Feldman and Thompson 1990; Pamental 1987).*

*In order to explore the possible effects of a Marketing and Society course on students, we examined marketing curricula of the undergraduate marketing programs of the top 20 universities in Australia and the U.S. This study revealed that in Australia 16 programs offer a Marketing Principles course at the start of the degree (pre-major) and not one of the programs has an introductory Macromarketing course or its equivalent. Further, of the 20 Australian schools, only four have a Macromarketing- or Marketing and Society-type course (See Appendix 1). In the U.S., none of the schools offer, much less require, students to take a Marketing and Society course. Of the 20 U.S. schools, seven offer an ethics course for business and/or marketing students (see Appendix 2). Based on this information, it appears that the emphasis of top schools in the U.S. and Australia is a micro orientation.*

*Catterall et al. (2002) argued that political, moral, and societal issues permeate managerial decision making and cannot be considered simply as an add-on to the marketing curriculum. Appropriately, Koch (1997) proposed that a study of the Marketing Environment should be the opening topic of marketing courses. This course would serve to emphasize the dynamics of the marketing environment and the implications of various marketing contexts. He argued that any discussion of company relationships and strategic response options, which are typically discussed in a Marketing Principles-equivalent course, should be deferred to prevent students from oversimplifying and trivializing complex marketing relationships and processes (Koch 1997). Currently, it is still not common to have a course that presents students with the dynamics of the marketing system and environment at the introductory level; nonetheless, such a course can be well-justified.*

*The pedagogy of economic theory takes two forms: (1) microeconomics, which is a study of the economic decisions that are made by individual participants in the market; and (2) macroeconomics, which is a study of relationships between broad aggregates of economic activity (Brummer 1985). Microeconomics is prevalent in economic curriculum as educators use a standard set of assumptions and theories to demonstrate how economic decisions should be made; however, macroeconomics appears to be less ubiquitous and standardized as educators describe and explain observable economic phenomena that are actually happening. This two-pronged approach to teaching introductory economics is congruent with Hunt's (1976) dichotomies of marketing study: micro/macro and normative/positive. Microeconomics is analogous to managerial or micromarketing in that the focus of both courses is to prescribe a range of choices in decision making based on the study of individual entities as the unit of analysis. The emphasis of macroeconomics curriculum would then be something that macromarketing scholars have aspired to in their marketing curriculum: a course that serves to describe the phenomena of transactions between aggregates of market participants and other stakeholders. The pioneers in macromarketing scholarship (e.g., Alderson, Slater, Hunt, Mittelstaedt, Shapiro) have already provided ample guidance for what this course should look like. It is hoped that such a course would provide a more comprehensive and accurate discourse in marketing beyond its managerial aspects.*

*This study represents a simple piece of work with many limitations. Small samples were used in only two countries as a preliminary attempt to collect information on course offerings. A larger sample of schools would be more representative. Further, we only looked at course titles and textbooks used to determine the nature of the courses. A more thorough study would need to examine the actual content of those courses.*

*Our contribution in this paper is to engender some discussion of whether some of these macro goals can be attained if a macromarketing course was pitched at the introductory level, perhaps even preceding the Marketing Principles course. Our proposition is that a course that discusses the interaction between marketing systems and society would be independent of managerial marketing and would not require any prior knowledge about the types of technologies involved in managerial marketing. For example, a meaningful discussion about the effects of junk food advertising targeting children would not require any assumed knowledge about market segmentation and promotional activities. Catterall et*

al. (2002) argued that students may lack knowledge or experience in managerial marketing, but they all have enough experience as consumers to relate to the wider environment. Indeed, it is hoped that if such a course was to precede a Marketing Principles course, students would be predisposed to thinking more critically about the impact of managerial marketing decisions in due course. Using a stand-alone introductory course, educators with a “macro” orientation would have the opportunity to introduce students to the complexity of business and consumer decision making. Students would consider issues of interactions of marketing in society and effects on various stakeholders before focusing on specific approaches to marketing strategies and tactics. In courses that follow, educators with a “micro” orientation may find themselves contending with students questioning whether marketing managers have considered the interests of other stakeholders in their decisions. This is a challenge for those wedded to the dominant logic because the marketing concept assumes that the interests of organizations, consumers, and society converge (Catterall et al. 2002) and any ensuing discussion often does not consider any interactions between these stakeholders and the constraints that it places on decision making in marketing.

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**Appendix 1**  
**Macro Courses at Australian Schools (Undergraduate)\***

<b>University</b>	<b>Macro-related Courses Prior to Marketing Principles</b>	<b>Offers Macro-related Courses</b>	<b>Offers Macromarketing or Marketing &amp; Society Course</b>	<b>Offers Ethics Course (area noted)</b>
Australian National University	No	Yes	Yes	Business
Melbourne	No	Yes	Yes	Business
Sydney	No	No	No	Management
Queensland	No	No	No	None
New South Wales	No	No	No	None
Monash	No	No	No	None
Western Australia	No	No	No	None
Adelaide	No	No	No	None
Macquarie	No	No	No	None
Queensland University of Technology	No	No	No	Business Law
Wollongong	No	Yes	Yes	Business
La Trobe	No	No	No	None
Newcastle	No	No	No	None
Tasmania	No	No	No	None
Griffith	No	Yes	Yes	None
University of Technology, Sydney	No	No	No	Business Law
Curtin	No	No	No	None
Flinders	No	No	No	None
Murdoch	No	No	No	None
RMIT	No	No	No	Marketing

\*2007 Australian University Rankings from the Melbourne Institute.

**Appendix 2**  
**Macro Courses at U.S. Schools\*\***

University	Macro-related Courses Prior to Marketing Principles	Offers Macro-related Courses	Offers Macromarketing or Marketing & Society Course	Offers Ethics Course (area noted)	Marketing Principles Textbook
Virginia	No	No	No	Business	N/A
Notre Dame	No	No	No	None	Etzel
Pennsylvania	No	No	No	Corporate	Niedermeier/Perreault (1)
Michigan	No	No	No	None	Nordhielm
Brigham Young	No	No	No	Management	Kotler
UC-Berkeley	No	No	No	Business	Armstrong
MIT	No	No	No	None	Kotler
Cornell	No	No	No	None	N/A
Emory	No	No	No	None	N/A
Texas	No	No	No	None	Perreault (2)
Villanova	No	No	No	None	Grewal
Richmond	No	No	No	None	Perreault (2)
North Carolina	No	No	No	Business	Perreault (1)
Wake Forest	No	No	No	None	N/A
NYU	No	No	No	None	N/A
Washington U.	No	No	No	None	Cryder/Kotler
Boston College	No	No	No	Marketing	Lamb
Miami U.	No	No	No	None	N/A
Carnegie Mellon	No	No	No	Business	N/A
Indiana	No	No	No	None	Grewal

\*\*Business Week Top 20 Business Schools (2009).

Etzel – *Marketing*  
Niedermeier – *Introduction to Marketing*  
Perreault (1) – *Essentials of Marketing*  
Perreault (2) – *Basic Marketing*  
Nordhielm – *Marketing Management: Big Picture*  
Kotler – *Principles of Marketing*  
Armstrong – *Marketing: Introduction*  
Grewal – *Marketing*  
Cryder – *Principles of Marketing*  
Lamb – *Marketing*